

S A L M O N B A Y

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Located on the Northeast Shore of Prince of Wales Island.

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ALASKA

MAR 21 1925

FISHERIES

There was a small run of sockeyes in this bay on July 1, when the first examination was made, and the number increased gradually. The run of sockeyes ended the latter part of July with the peak of the run being between July 19 and 26; however, it proved a very small run in comparison with former years.

A few humpbacks began jumping in the bay August 1, but the principal run commenced August 12 and by August 17 there were practically 2000 humpbacks in the upper creek. From August 22 to 28 there was an average of 200 humpbacks escaping per day.

In regard to fishing in this bay, will say there were several seine boats in Salmon Bay throughout the season. The mouth of the bay is very narrow and these boats anchored immediately below the dead line, thereby catching 90% of the fish, on either the incoming or receding tide.

S U M M A R Y

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In regard to the escapement of sockeyes up stream, will say, since I have been stationed here, my opinion is it has been small as compared with total number of run. The fishermen all agree that this years run was much below that of the last few years, judging from my own observations.

There was first, all through July too much water in creek and during last few days of July and so far in August too little. During most of July the stream was at freshet stage which sounds all right but for sockeyes too much water is as bad as too little. In a stream where the fishing is as keen as it is here the fishermen only wait for one jump to lay out net and there were so many seines, that day after day by time of low tide apparently every salmon had been taken. The reason too much fresh water in a stream is a detriment is that sockeyes do not go up stream at once on arrival but go up

and down with tide until they become used to fresh water.. Now in an ordinary season here they will go up and down maybe a couple of tides and then lodge in a place here that fishermen call the hole, which is a deep spot in tidal portion of creek about 400 ft. in length, varying in depth at low water from 6 ft. to 20 ft. When creek is not at high stage water in this hole remains about half salt until high tide fills it again. I have seen as many as 5000 or 6000 fish in there at one time and have heard of much larger numbers being caught there on one low tide. Through most of July this year on account of freshet in creek the water became perfectly fresh in hole toward the last of runout on ebb. I tasted water a number of times. When the water got too fresh the sockeyes would drop out of hole and come down to lower bay and as soon as they got where water was salt they started jumping and playing; all of the time, drifting with the current until they got over deadline which was their finish. None of them survived long enough to be able to stand the fresh water in hole or in the stream itself. I watched hole many days for signs of salmon lodged there. Many times I saw that not one salmon had remained over tide and then during hot dry spell when creek level was falling day after day the salmon did not seem to attempt to go up stream to lake and in evenings of very hot days water got too warm for them in hole and they would come down over riffles to lower bay and all those that crossed deadline were caught. That was what boats Era and Castle were waiting for the last two or three weeks, all of the other boats having left when the number of fish coming in from straits became too small to justify their staying longer. The fishermen on the Castle and Era are wise as to the way salmon act here in dry weather and they caught about \$2000.00 worth of fish after other boats had gone elsewhere. Nine out of every ten sockeyes caught had been in hole for varying lengths of time, some were very black. They have not given up even yet, the Castle is at the mouth of the bay this morning

(August 16) in hopes of getting a haul but there are not many fish around this morning, although there are still a number in hole.

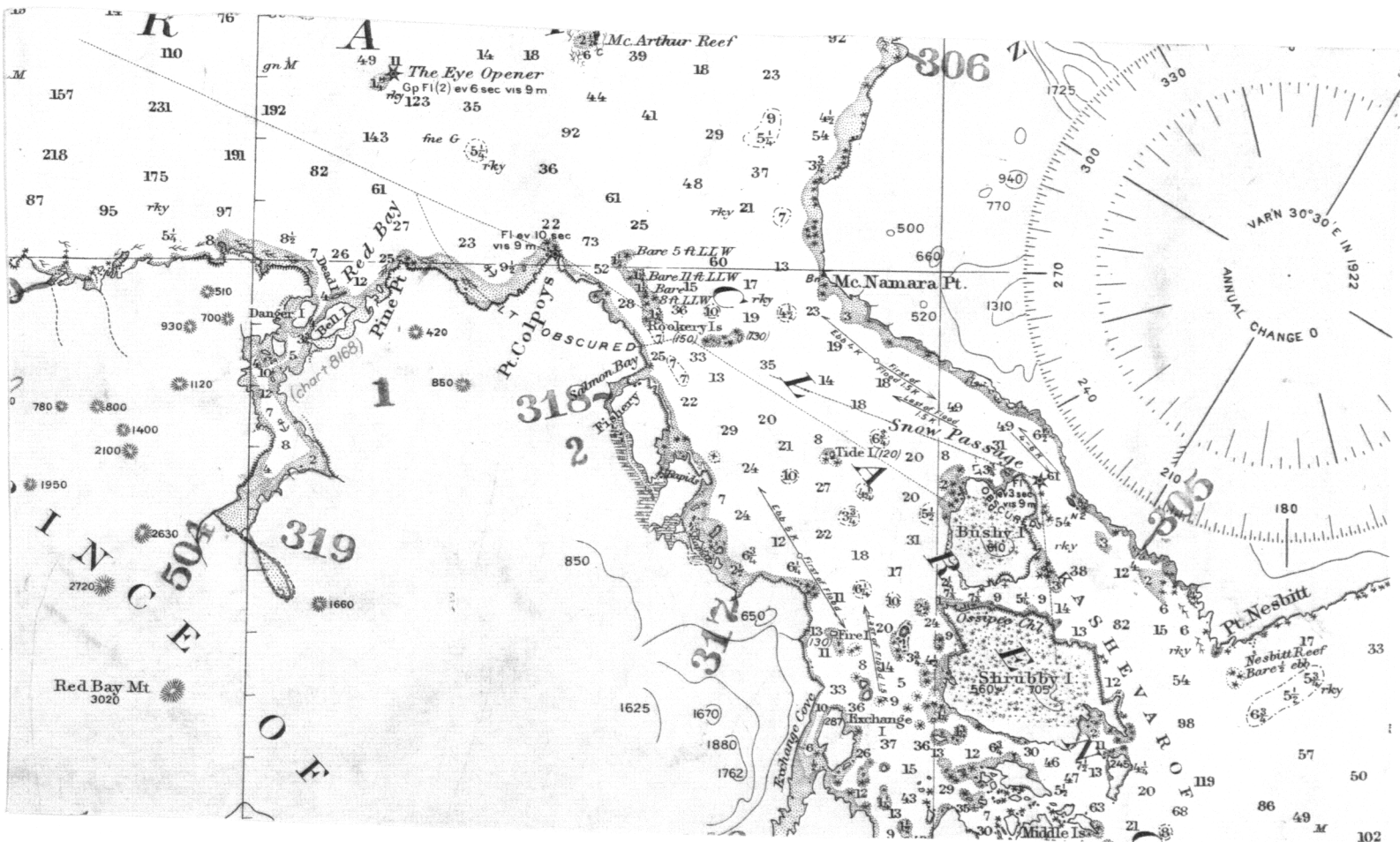
There is another problem now to confront in allowing escapement of fish; that is, these prolonged dry spells in summer. Since 1922, when I was at Thorne Bay the dry weather has lasted longer than the humpback run. In 1922 the small streams like Tolstoi, Snug Cove, South Arm and those two small streams towards Narrow Point did not get any fish to plant eggs. I looked at them all after humpbacks had quit coming in any more and no fish were in evidence; all had been caught in salt water around mouths of the streams. Last year I was working on Cleveland Peninsula and two small streams at Vixen Inlet from which two seiners, I know, told me they got fifty thousand humpbacks between two boats. These streams did not have a live fish in them for a distance of about a mile above their mouths. Above that point there was no stream - just the creek bed. This was when salmon had quit showing anywhere in Ernest Sound or around the creek mouths.

If this Salmon Bay stream had been closed to all fishing even for a part of the time the sockeyes were running there is no doubt but the run could have been brought back to normal. I have been familiar with this stream for about 25 years or more and it has been abused to an unbelievable extent, almost all of that time, and still it persists in producing sockeyes. It is a subject of comment wherever any old timers are discussing the destruction of the salmon in Alaska, as it seems to disprove our arguments.

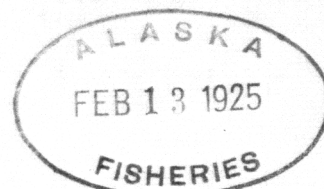
The run of salmon has been depleted in many streams, that have not been fished nearly so much as this one, to such an extent that it does not pay to fish any more. Some condition or something about this stream or lake must be very favorable for the production of salmon.

J.A.Kelley,
Stream Watchman.

Season of 1924.



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF FISHERIES



Report from J.A.Kelley, Stream Watchman,

Salmon Bay

About the escapement of sockeyes up stream, since I have been stationed here, my opinion is it has been small as compared with total number of run. The fishermen all agree that this years run was much below that of the last few years. My own observation bears out that.

There was first, all through July, too much water in creek and during last days of July and so far in August too little. During most of July the stream was at freshet stage, which sounds all right but for sockeyes too much water is as bad as too little in a stream where the fishing is as keen as it is here. The fishermen only wait for one jump to lay out net and there were so many seines, that day after day by time of low tide apparently every salmon had been taken.

The reason that too much fresh water in stream is not beneficial is that sockeyes do not go up stream at once on arrival but go up and down with tide, till they become used to fresh water. Now in an ordinary season here they will go up and down may be a couple of tides and then lodge in a place here that fishermen call the hole, which is a deep spot in tidal portion of creek about 400 ft. in length, varying in depth at low water from 6 ft. to 20 ft. When creek is not at high stage water in this remains about half salt until next high tide fills in again. I have seen as many as 5,000 or 6,000 fish in there at one time and have heard of much larger numbers being caught there on one low tide.

Through the most of July this year, on account of freshet in creek, the water became perfectly fresh in holt towards the last of runout on ebb. I tasted water a number of times. When the water got too fresh the sockeye would drop out of hole and come down to lower bay, and as soon as they got where water was salt they started jumping and playing; all the time drifting with the current till they got over deadline, which was their finish. None of them survived long enough to be able to stand the fresh water in hole or in the stream itself. I watched hole many days for signs of salmon lodged there, many times, I did not see that one salmon had remained over tide and then during hot dry spell when creek level was falling day after day the salmon did not seem to attempt to go up stream to lake and in evenings of very hot days water got too warm for them in hole and they would come down over riffles to lower bay and all those that crossed deadline were caught.

That was what the boats Era and Castle were waiting for the last two or three weeks. All the boats left when the number of fish coming in from straits became too small to justify staying longer. Those two fellows on Era and Castle are wise to the way salmon act here in dry weather and they caught about two thousand dollars worth of fish after other boats had gone elsewhere.

Nine out of ten of all sockeyes they got had been in hole for varying length of time, some were very black. They have not given up even yet. Castle is off mouth of bay this morning - August 16, in hopes of getting a haul, but there are no fish around this morning, although there is still a number in hole. There is another problem now to confront in allowing escapement of fish, that is, these prolonged dry spells in summer, since 1922, when I was at Thorne Bay, the dry weather has lasted longer than humpback run.

In 1922 the small streams like Tolstoi, Snug Cove, South Arm and those two small streams towards Narrow Point got no fish to plant eggs. I looked at them all after humpbacks had quit coming in. There were no fish in them; all had been caught in salt water around their mouths.

Last year I was working on Cleveland Peninsula and two small streams at Vixen Inlet, from which two seiners I know told me they got fifty thousand humpies between two boats, did not have a live fish in them for a distance of about a mile above their mouths. Above that point there was no stream, only the creek bed. This was when salmon had quit showing anywhere in Ernest Sound or around creek mouth.

If this Salmon Bay stream had been closed to all fishing even for a part of the time the sockeyes were running there is no doubt but it could be brought back strong. I am familiar with this stream for about 25 years or more and it has been abused to an unbelievable extent, almost all that time and still it persists in producing sockeyes. It is a subject of comment wherever any old timers are discussing the destruction of the salmon in Alaska, as it seems to disprove our arguments.

Many streams that have not been used nearly so bad as this one have been cleaned out so bad that they do not pay to fish any more. Some condition or something about this stream or lake must be very favorable for the production of salmon.

(Signed) J.A. Kelley.
Stream Watchman,
Salmon Bay.

August 16, 1924.

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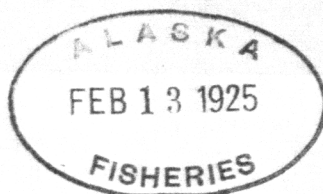
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